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dialogue

The Staff Newsletter of the Ministry of Community and Social Services

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Funding to further the Multi-Year Plan

The ministry is releasing \$21.08 million in new funding for services for people with developmental disabilities in 1993-94. The funding covers the seventh year of the Multi-Year Plan, which concludes March 31, 1994. It is part of the phasing-out of institutionalized settings for people with developmental disabilities. Replacing the facilities will be a comprehensive service system that is based in communities.

MCSS Minister Tony Silipo announced the release of the funding on Sept. 20 at the META Centre in north Toronto, which operates programs for adults with developmental disabilities.

"This commitment, supported by all political parties, shows this government's resolve to support the most vulnerable members in our society, even during a time of fiscal restraint," said the minister. The funding is being distributed as follows:

- \$4.45 million will fund the community placements of the remaining residents at Northwestern Regional Centre in Thunder Bay (which is expected to close by March

1994) and residents who lived at Muskoka Centre in Gravenhurst (it closed in June).

- \$3 million to initiate the closure of Oxford Regional Centre in Woodstock.
- \$2.69 million to proceed with more community placements from other government institutions.
- \$2 million to fund a commitment to continue to meet the critical services needs of families who have a family member with a developmental or physical disability (through the Special Services At Home program).
- \$5.89 million to promote the development of community services, based on consultation with local community planning groups.
- \$2.01 million to fund new and existing services in Midland's St. Andrews Centennial Manor and Stayner's Sweetbriar Nursing Home.
- \$841,000 to address health and safety measures in five facilities.

Specific initiatives for some of the funding will be announced locally.

Brian Pickall photo



Minister Tony Silipo meets META Centre participant David Tobin during David's music therapy exercise session.

MCSS restructures: An update

The ministry's restructuring project is continuing to implement the organizational changes that were announced in July.

The implementation includes both administrative and developmental changes for the ministry. Administrative changes include staff redeployment and recruitment, physical accommodation, and the closure of the regional offices.

To date, there has been significant redeployment activity for staff whose jobs are changing or being eliminated as a result of the restructuring. See "Executive appointments" on this page and "People on the move" on the next for some of the changes; future issues of *Dialogue* will keep you up to date.

The implementation's developmental

changes will support the "new ways of doing business" that were described alongside the new structure of the ministry. These changes include activities such as the design of new ministry networks; a new policy development process; realignment of area management roles; new financial and systems policies and procedures; and a staff training and development plan that will bring divisions together to achieve ministry goals.

An implementation plan that integrates all of these elements has been approved by the ministry's Management Committee to be used to guide the restructuring through this year and 1994. This plan will integrate the restructuring activities that are occurring in each of the divisions and across the divisions.

Executive appointments

As part of the restructuring of MCSS, a number of senior appointments have been made.

In the Program Management Division, **Barry Whalen** is now director of the Management Support Branch (formerly Operational Co-ordination). He has been



Barry Whalen

acting director, and previously was the area manager in Mississauga.

Brian Low is director of the new Developmental Services Branch. He was administrator of Huronia Regional Centre and



Brian Low

Adult Occupational Centre, and also was manager of the ministry's Multi-Year Plan. He begins his new duties Nov. 1.

In the Social Assistance & Employment

Opportunity Division, **Mary Kardos Burton** is director of Social Assistance Programs. She was director of Human Resources for the past three years and before that was senior manager of Federal/Provincial Cost-Sharing in Financial and Administrative Services Branch.



Lynne Bullard

Lynne Bullard is now area manager in Peterborough. Lynne has been acting regional director for Central Region and

prior to that was director, Operational Co-ordination Branch.

Also, **Louise-Anne Ransstead** joins the ministry as area manager for Mississauga. She comes to us from Management Board Secretariat where she

was director of the Technology and Information Management Branch since 1990; she has also worked at Ministry of Revenue.



Louise-Anne Ransstead



Mary Kardos Burton

Amethyst Award winners at MCSS

Five of the 22 awards given at the Amethyst Awards on Oct. 4 were given to MCSS staff — the most of any ministry.

The first-ever Amethyst Awards, which recognize outstanding achievement by Ontario public servants during Customer Service Week, were held at the Ontario Science Centre.

At MCSS, the recipients were:

- Joyce Bodner of Queen's Park, now retired, who led the successful electronic funds transfer project (EFT) that now provides direct deposit of most social assistance cheques directly into recipients' bank accounts;

- Ken Kealey, a now-retired probation officer from Lady Ellen Place in Ottawa, for developing the Preventative Intervention Program for young people who need a second chance;

- Florence Lake, a program supervisor from Sault Ste. Marie, for her work in developing a responsive and effective child care system for the Algoma community;

- John Stapleton, acting director of special projects at Queen's Park, and Joan Spence, who now works for the World Bank in her birthplace, Jamaica, for their work in developing the Council of Consumers, a group dedicated to improving the social assistance system;

- The Sudbury Efficiency Project, a group of 22 individuals working on four sub-committees, for innovative cost savings and service efficiencies achieved by the Local Interministerial Networking Committee. This was one of only two "group" awards to win an Amethyst.

A total of 277 nominations were received. Look for more coverage in the next issue of *Dialogue*.



Programs move to OTAB

Three employment programs are being transferred to the Ontario Training and Adjustment Board. These will include the transfer of 18 full-time equivalent positions by Mar. 31, 1994.

The Social Services Employment Program (SSEP), Summer Employment Experience program (SEE) and Part-time Employment Experience program (PTEE) will be transferred under the direction of a working group chaired by Marilyn Stephenson. Bev Shukyn from the Toronto Area Office has been seconded to OTAB to help.

Regional office models



Some staff at the Southwest Regional Office in London have been "discovered" and found to have previously unrecognized talents.

Two employees — Ning Wu, an information co-ordinator, and Lynne Swanson, human resources co-ordinator — have been surprised to be featured as fashion models in the London Free Press newspaper.

Lynne originally appeared in the paper in February as a result of a charity fashion show in which she participated. The Free Press then asked her to model for a photograph for its "Elements of Style" fashion column.

Ning was walking through the downtown Galleria London shopping mall with a colleague at lunchtime and was spotted by the same Free Press photographer who photographed Lynne. She was asked to

participate on the spot in the "Double Take" column which portrays real-life people in eye-catching clothing ensembles. Her photo appeared in June.

Lynne and Ning's experiences show how unexpectedly new abilities and talents can appear.

Alan Clark
Southwestern Regional Office
London

Photos: Sue Rowe, London Free Press/Reprinted with permission



Photo of Lynne Swanson (left) shows Lynne with some of her colour-coordinated canes, publicizing a fashion show for the Multiple Sclerosis Society; at right, photo of Ning Wu showed her in home-sewn ensemble that caught the eye of a newspaper photographer.

Racism commission holding forums

The Commission on Systemic Racism in the Ontario Criminal Justice System is holding public forums in a number of cities across the province during October and November.

The commissioners are interested in hearing about your experiences, views and proposed solutions to systemic racism.

Participation in these forums is likely to be of greatest interest to MCSS young-offender workers, as well as Corrections staff.

Participation can be by brief or letter, public presentation at one of the public forums (afternoon and evening sessions are scheduled), or by meeting privately with the commissioners.

Contact the commission toll-free at 1-800-463-8803.

Interpreters available to OPS staff

Ontario Public Service employees who need visual or oral sign language interpreters now have this service available to them through a pilot project.

The OPS Interpreter Services (OPIS) project began on Sept. 7. It is a one-year pilot project operated through the Centre for Disability and Work and is funded by Management Board Secretariat. The project will ensure reliable access to qualified interpreters — a service that deaf employees have identified as a need.

For more information, contact project officer Georgia Whalen at the centre (voice: (416) 326-7810; TTY: 326-7821).

Thistletown review

A report on an internal review of operations at Thistletown Regional Centre (TRC) was released Sept. 16. The report makes a number of recommendations for improvements in operations at TRC, which provides services and supports for troubled youth at three main campuses and several satellite locations.

The review was done by a team of staff led by the ministry's Comprehensive Audit and Review Branch.

In early spring, Minister Tony Silpo asked the team to review management's response to allegations of sexual harassment and unfair hiring practices at York Detention Centre. As the issue of sexual harassment is currently before the courts, those portions of the report have been severed. The team found no evidence to support allegations of cover-ups or unfair hiring practices.

The ministry will follow up on the review team's recommendation to continue educating staff on the government's existing policy of zero tolerance for workplace harassment and discrimination.

Other recommendations include a range of areas involving management, administration, finance and human resources.

TRC programs include the operation of York Detention Centre for young offenders and of Syl Apps Campus, a secure detention centre for young offenders, among others.

Named to HR

Margaret Weightman becomes acting director of Human Resources Branch as of Oct. 18, replacing Mary Kardos Burton. The appointment will be for at least three months while a search is under way for a permanent director. Margaret is currently the chief accountant in Financial and Administrative Services Branch.

People on the move

Co-ordinators for the new Management Support Branch have been named. Heather Martin will have responsibility for Children's Services programs; Irene Schaeffer for Community Services; Karen Glass for Child Care; and Andre Iannuzziello for Social Assistance and Employment Opportunity. Gord Markham is the co-ordinator for the new Developmental Services Branch.

In Financial and Capital Planning Branch, the following staff changes have taken place: Dave Cope is now manager, Estimates and Allocation; Dennis Norton is manager of Program Support and Analysis; and Andrew Mellor has been assigned to work with the branch director on special projects. Also, Ann Szyntur is manager, Financial Reporting, and Katherine Willson is manager, Capital.

Chodna McMullin is acting executive co-ordinator of the Strategic Estimates Planning Secretariat. She comes to us from the Ministry of Treasury and Economics.

Nuzhat Jafri has been appointed the Manager of Employment Equity, replacing Kathy Macpherson who is now Manager of the Physical Workplace Program.

John Burkus recently retired from the ministry. He joined the OPS in 1960 and came to MCSS in 1982 as ADM of

Policy and Program Development. Most recently he was Special Advisor to the Deputy Minister.

Ann Beauclerc has retired as administrator of D'Arcy Place, Cobourg, after 33 years with the OPS. John Hewitt, administrator of Prince Edward Heights, will take on an additional role as administrator at D'Arcy Place.

Other recent retirements include: Vic Churchman from Financial and Administrative Services Branch, after 26 years in the OPS; and George Tuttle from Purchasing, after 20 years in the OPS, all with MCSS.



Frank Capitano

Also retired from the ministry is Frank Capitano, who for the past 14 years has been the area manager in London and had been with the ministry since 1973. Frank's last

day was Sept. 17; on Sept. 20, he began a new career as executive director of the London Co-ordinating Council for Children and Youth.

Peter Steckenreiter has been appointed acting area manager in London for a three-month period. He is the regional manager of finance and administration in the Southwestern Regional Office.

MCSS at FORUM

Staff in the Communications and Marketing Branch were honoured with four awards at the 1993 Information Officers' FORUM competition for excellence in communications.

The Winter 1993 issue of *Dialogue* — "A Day in the Life of MCSS: Our Story in Photos" — received a Gold Award for photo essay series. Most of the photos taken for the series on October 5, 1992, were by ministry staff around the province.

A Gold Award was also given for the video "A Bridge to Better Times." It went to CMB staff members Debbie Adamson, David Rudan, Doreen Pikeately, Crista Renner and Camille Finlay.

A Silver Award was given to CMB writer Alan Fleming for "His Own Space in His Own Place," a *Dialogue* feature story about a Huronia Regional Centre resident relocating to a group home in Grimsby. It was the cover story in the Fall 1992 issue of *Dialogue*.

A Silver Award was given to Debbie



Adamson, Robert Miller and Julia Naczynski for "Better Beginnings, Better Futures," a video about the project of the same name.

Information Officers' FORUM is a voluntary organization for communicators in the Ontario Public Service which holds an annual competition.

Stories and photos by Elaine Lynch, NRC

Editor's note: Last month, we told you about two "redeployment success stories" of staff from Huronia Regional Centre. This month, we have five profiles of staff from Northwestern Regional Centre in Thunder Bay.

A career in computers

As Bill Abramowicz sits at a computer scanning documents, he says there is a vast difference in the work he is doing today compared to six months ago.

That was when he was redeployed to the Ministry of Consumer and Commercial Relations' Office of the Registrar General. Today he works as a document processor.

Prior to that, he worked for 25 years as a residential counsellor and eventually as a wing supervisor at NRC.

Says Bill, "I'm thankful for the opportunity to do something else. I always wanted to be familiar with computers and



Bill Abramowicz has an opportunity to satisfy a life-long desire to work with computers at his new job with the Ministry of Consumer and Commercial Relations.

this job gives me the opportunity to do that. I see the experience as a positive thing and the change has been very good for me."

Bill is one of a contingent of 25 NRC staff who went to MCCR from Northwestern.

His trainer, Murray Luck, says that for people coming from the human services field, it is sometimes hard to get used to working at a keyboard all day, but he is very pleased with the 25 employees that came to his ministry from NRC. And they have one thing that many other people don't

have — each other, for support and encouragement in a new job and new environment.

Good-byes at NRC

Northwestern Regional Centre in Thunder Bay will close sometime before Mar. 31, 1994. To mark the occasion there will be a "Lights Out" Social gathering for former staff on Friday, Dec. 3, 1993. This will be held at the Current River Recreation Centre, 450 Dewar Avenue, Thunder Bay, from 8 p.m. to 1 a.m. Tickets went on sale in September and are \$3 per person. As the location has a limited capacity, make sure to get your ticket early. To obtain tickets or for more information, call Elaine Lynch, community relations co-ordinator, at 807-343-4328.

She's now a nurse

Turallee Vaccher, an employee at NRC for six years, started making plans for her future as soon as she first heard that NRC would eventually close. A few years before she was declared surplus, she began attending nursing school while at the same time working full-time as a residential counsellor.

Turallee says some very special supervisors allowed her to work only the evening and midnight shifts, which made her schooling possible. It was a grueling schedule, as one can imagine.

After she was finally declared surplus last May, Tura had the advantage of having the remainder of her education paid for under retraining. Then she was able to utilize her developmental leave to do the placement requirement she needed in order to graduate.

"I could never have



Turallee Vaccher is now a nurse working on a casual basis on the neurological ward of a Thunder Bay hospital and also has a part-time job with a local agency serving people with developmental disabilities.

done what I have done under normal circumstances. I would have had to quit," says Tura.

On her second shift of a placement on a neurological ward, she was offered a position as "permanent casual." It was a

dream come true. With the job situation so tight, Tura did not expect to get a job so soon in the area in which she wants to specialize.

She fills out her income and employment needs with a part-time job involving high-needs clients with a local community agency. Her commitment is still in the area of developmental services.

For Tura, closure made her pursue her career goal that much sooner and achieve her goal faster. She is proof that there is life outside the OPS.

From recreation to teamwork

Frank Pascuzzo has to admit that he saw very little future in his field as a recreationist working with people with developmental disabilities — a job he did for 17 years at NRC. He also served as vocational instructor and acting supervisor of both of those departments.

For him, the timing of his surplus assignment with the Office of the Registrar General "could not have been better." He is part of what's called a "dedicated search team," and does his job with enthusiasm.

"I love what I am doing here as part of a team," says Frank. "The way we were trained was excellent. Over a period of six weeks, we were exposed to all the jobs involved in the work that we do, so that we understand how it all fits together. That prepares us to do those jobs eventually." With the team approach, everyone rotates jobs.

Frank's excitement about his job is sincere. He does not look back. He enjoyed what he did while he did it, but



Frank Pascuzzo and staff trainer Murray Luck look over one of the old hand-written record books that dates as far back as 1896.

now he feels grateful to have a chance at a new career within the Ontario Public Service.

Physical activity suits Sylvia

The last time we met Sylvia Nickoluk, it was in the Winter 1993 issue of *Dialogue*, in which NRC information officer Elaine Lynch movingly described how staff are "Coping with

surplus at Northwestern Regional Centre" (page 26 of that issue).

As supervisor and union president of OPSEU Local 715 at NRC, Sylvia was known for her high energy and sociable nature. Now, in the mailroom of the Office of the Registrar General, she is one of the most physically-active people in the building.

After 25 years of helping people, first as a residential counsellor and later as a supervisor, she says the impulse doesn't die. She likes to take other team members under her wing and offer assistance wherever she can.

"I like the activity level but I miss the 'people' aspect of my former job," she says. She points to new fatigue-reducing floor mats that ease the stress of moving around her mail machine on the concrete floor as proof of the degree of consideration shown to employees.

"We've been treated extremely well here," says Sylvia.



Sylvia Nickoluk at her high-tech mail machine that recently processed 20,000 pieces of mail in two days. Her new job is a lot different than caring for NRC clients, she says.

At air ambulance

Irene Pampur was reluctant to leave NRC after 17 years in office work as an OAG-8. The transition from a familiar job, where she knew a family of co-workers, to her current position with the Ministry of Health's Air Ambulance Service in Thunder Bay where she knew no one, was not always smooth.

Irene says her previous position involved more conventional secretarial duties, whereas half of her current duties are related to finance. There was a lot to learn, but since she was redeployed last September, she has gone through extensive training and, as she gained experience, she has become more comfortable and competent in the job.

Career-wise, Irene says she had always avoided finance and is pleasantly surprised that she derives such a sense of accomplishment from the work.

Even the social aspect of the job has become more comfortable. She is the only OAG-level person with Air Ambulance, and there is only one other woman — a paramedic — among 17 men. But as paramedics go in and out of her office, there is a sense of fun and



Irene Pampur in her office above the air ambulance hangar.

camaraderie. Irene says there was a time when she could not see such a positive outcome.

"What I want people to know is that not everyone accepts people who come to them through redeployment, especially if you are 'bumping' someone. The staff can be very attached to your predecessor," says Irene. It's a big change, and it takes time to adjust.

Customers speak out about VRS

Vocational Rehabilitation Services in the southwest has been putting the emphasis on customer service and a recent gathering of clients is helping other VRS offices determine what clients want and need.

In May, two dozen VRS clients gathered in London at the invitation of VRS counselors to have them identify relevant VRS issues prior to developing a customer service questionnaire for the Hamilton, Waterloo, Windsor and London areas. Similar group sessions took place earlier in the Waterloo and Windsor offices.

The clients who attended the London gathering represented a broad range of disabilities and were involved in various stages of the rehabilitation process. To be sure of honest feedback, some of the clients were chosen because they had been openly critical of VRS services.

The meeting was facilitated by John Robertson from the Southwest Regional Office, with John Wiebe and Colleen Manning of the London VRS Office there as recorders.

The participants at all client gatherings were asked how they became aware of VRS, what they expected, what works and what doesn't, and what should be changed.

The overall results were very favourable. Participants commented on the quality of

the service and its relevance.

Some of the more interesting ideas that were put forward included the following:

- Set up a client volunteer program linking clients with clients in a supportive role.
- Invite "successful" clients to give testimonials at orientation sessions for applicants.
- Use clients as advocates for other clients.
- Advertise, let people know you exist.
- Establish a client advisory group (alumni).
- Encourage group meetings for clients, make it an annual event.

As follow-up, participants were given notes on the meeting and the recommendations made by the customer services committee that reviewed the outcomes of the London, Waterloo and Windsor groups.

One recommendation was that a focus group format be used, rather than the original idea of a questionnaire, because groups provide greater opportunity for discussion and sharing of ideas.

Colleen Manning
John Wiebe
VRS London

New life-jackets cause big splash at Rideau

Story and photo by Susan Best, RRC

The pool staff at Rideau Regional Centre in Smiths Falls are in the lifesaving business, but because of their dedication to residents and their special needs, they're now in the life-jacket-making business.

For a few years, staff had been trying to purchase new "keyhole" life-jackets. The jackets that were being used in the swim program were very old; the cotton material was ripped and they became easily saturated and increasingly unusable.

After many attempts to locate a new supplier, staff discovered that the model they required was no longer available. The newer personal floatation devices were made of nylon and did not have the same buoyancy as the older model, and therefore would not meet the needs of RRC residents. The older life-jackets were repaired by recovering them with new material, but this solution could only be used a limited number of times.

Working with Malcolm MacIntosh and Terry Steele from the physiotherapy seating and devices workshop, the original jackets were used to make a pattern. Terry and Malcolm recommended a closed-cell foam which was purchased for the body of the jackets, and then covered them with nylon material. The cost is under \$30 per jacket.

Mary Anne Haughian, Carmel McConnell and Joyce Paul, swimming pool lifeguards, took turns putting the new jackets together, using the industrial sewing machine in the workshop.

All the old jackets have now been replaced and the new ones are working well for resident swimmers. The pattern is being altered to make longer jackets that will fit larger-sized residents.

The new jackets meet the needs of residents at a fraction of the cost of manufactured replacements.



Lifeguard Mary Anne Haughian assists Mark Bouleau during an evening swim at the Rideau Regional Centre pool.

Report shows kids fear future

A province-wide study prepared for the Premier's Council on Health, Well-being and Social Justice shows youngsters are worried about their futures and that their dreams will not be fulfilled.

The Aspirations Report showed children are concerned about their financial future and their education — even

children as young as 10.

Community consultations are to be held in the coming months by the Children and Youth Project of the Premier's Council to address some of the concerns.

To obtain a copy of the Aspirations Report, contact Angela Chung at the council (416-326-6762) for information.

A top typist



Maureen Tucker shows off the two-finger finesse that earned her the title of Fastest Two Fingers on a Keyboard in Canada (or at least London).

A London Area Office employee has brought fame to MCSS by winning the First Annual Great Canadian Two-Finger Typing Contest.

Maureen Tucker, a Vocational Rehabilitation Services clerk, won the August 19 event by typing 72 words a minute — using only two fingers (her left forefinger and right middle finger).

Maureen entered the contest on a dare by a fellow employee, and a result of her win, her co-worker had to cut off his pony-tail (to the cheers of colleagues). Her other prize was a gift certificate from the contest sponsor (a local mall) and the offer of typing lessons (which she rightfully declined).

Maureen's two-finger typing prowess has been profiled in magazines and newspapers across Canada. Ever humble, Maureen was quoted as saying incredulously, "You mean some people use more than two fingers?" She has been with the ministry for four years.

In this age of 10-finger touch typing, 50 to 60 words a minute is considered a good speed; 25 words per minute is the minimum standard for passing a high-school typing course.

Maureen will defend her Canadian title in August 1994.

Area code changes

Don't forget that after Oct. 4 the 416 long-distance code was split up by Bell Canada, so if you haven't made changes to area codes you contact in southern Ontario, you should do so now.

Metroplitan Toronto keeps the 416 area code, but if you're calling a 416 number outside the Metro area, you should be using the new 905 area code. The 905 area code now applies to the Golden Horseshoe (Hamilton to Fort Erie and Niagara-on-the-Lake), the area north of Metro Toronto



and east as far as Colborne.

You'll need to update phone listings, automatic dialing systems, computer and

network services. And if you work in the new 905 area, you'll need to put the new code on stationery (including brochures, letters/memos, business cards, literature and forms), fax and phone speed diallers, call forwarding, answering machines and pagers. Don't forget to notify clients, suppliers and contacts about the change.

dialogue

Ontario Community and Social Services

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